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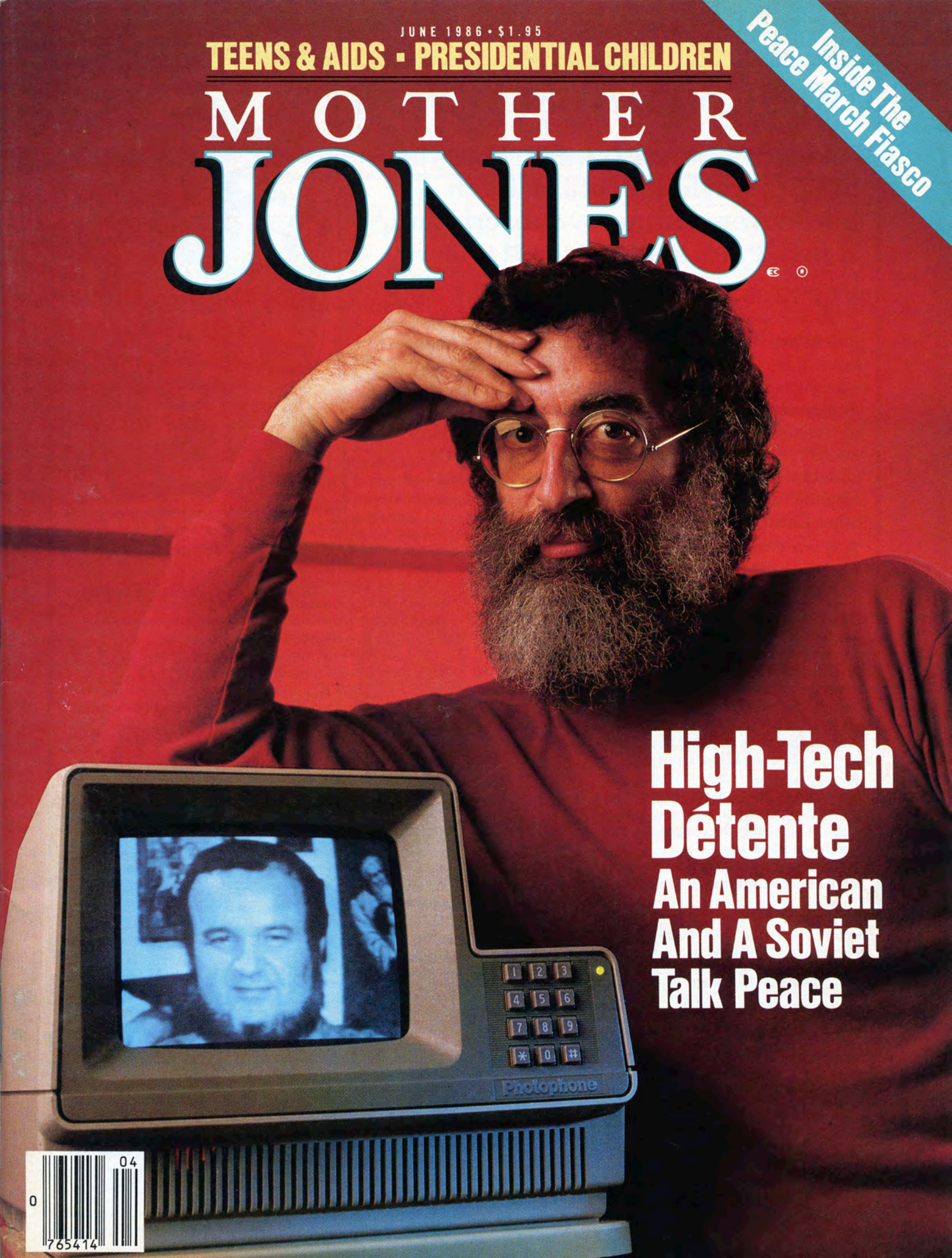
MOTHER JONES

Inside The Peace March Fiasco



High-Tech Détente

An American And A Soviet Talk Peace

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Worldwide party line: His Radio Shack portable computer wired to the receiver, Joel Schatz sends a message to Moscow from a telephone booth in San Francisco's Chinatown.

2

VISIONARIES—ONE AMERICAN, ONE SOVIET—PLOT AN ELECTRONIC DÉTENTE

Slow-Scan To Moscow

Joel Schatz has wire-rimmed glasses and an Old Testament–sized beard. A big head of curly black hair flecked with gray adds a few extra inches to his six-foot-two frame. "This trip we're about to take," he says enthusiastically, "is so important that I've even gotten a haircut." Its effects are not noticeable.

Joel is sitting in the study of his San Francisco apartment, where most of the furniture consists of pillows on the floor. The largest thing in sight is an enormous reflector telescope, which can be pivoted around on its pedestal and aimed out a high window, Joel explains, "to remind me of my place in the cosmos. We're all voyagers out there.

"If I had millions of dollars I'd build neighborhood observatories all over the world. And at each one I'd have good conga drums, so people could drum together as well as observe."

The object of Joel's attention at this moment, however, as it is much of the time, is his four-pound, briefcase-size Radio Shack Tandy Model 100 portable computer. "I bought this machine for $399. For $1.82 a minute—$1.82!—I can send a telex message to Moscow. This technology is going to revolutionize human communications! Think what it will mean when you can get thousands of Americans and Soviets on the same computer network. Once scientists in both countries begin talking to each other on these machines *they won't be able to stop.* And we'll be taking a running leap over the governments on both sides.

"I'm not a scientist," Joel adds. "I've only owned a computer for four months. I don't understand how they work. I'll leave that to other people. I'm just interested in how they can improve communication on this planet."

Joel has already made three trips to Russia in the last year and a half to work on two types of U.S.-Soviet electronic exchanges. One has been large-screen two-way TV broadcasts, known as "space-bridges." The other has been a link between a Moscow apartment and a southern California radio

BY ADAM HOCHSCHILD

Photograph By Ed Kashi

studio, in which an odd assortment of people ranging from TV mogul Ted Turner and an Oakland, California, fireman to poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko and a Moscow faith healer have talked to one another live, over U.S. and Canadian radio stations. In a few days, Joel is leaving for Moscow again. Intrigued by the novelty of his various missions, I have invited myself along.

A day or two before our departure, I stop in at Joel's apartment again, and find him staring at the display screen of the Radio Shack computer. He is stumped by the latest message to appear in his "electronic mailbox": LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU. PLEASE BRING SLOW-SCAN TV EQUIPMENT AND TECHNICIAN.

"Slow-scan television!" says Joel. "Jesus! Where are we going to get one of those!"

Slow-scan television is an inexpensive technology that has been used by American scientists for 20 years or so. Basically it allows you to send a still picture over a telephone line. This means you can send visual images long distances without buying time on a space satellite, which costs thousands of dollars an hour.

"Well," Joel scratches his head, "if they want slow-scan, we better give them slow-scan."

During the next day Joel arranges for the loan of a slow-scan from a Colorado manufacturer who is interested in world peace (and would also doubtless like to sell some of his machines to the Soviet Union). The manufacturer assures him that the equipment is simple to operate, and that all the instructions are in the box.

"If the Soviets want a technician," says Joel, "we're going to have to bring him in by TV."

The slow-scan apparatus is sealed in a waist-high cardboard carton. We are to change planes in London, but at the San Francisco airport, Joel checks the box directly through to Moscow. He then squeezes into a phone booth, connects his Radio Shack computer to the receiver, and dials his electronic mailbox to check for messages one last time before we leave the country. On the flight to England I ask Joel, who is 48 years old, about his life before he started doing U.S.-Soviet electronic exchanges.

"I was energy advisor to the governor of Oregon for five years. Before that, one job I had was at a mental health center in Colorado. Once I handed out a questionnaire to all the psychiatrists working there asking them what they did to cope with being depressed. There were a variety of answers: they listened to music, they had love affairs, they took a few days off work, they went camping. I pointed out that none of these services, absolutely none, did we offer to depressed patients coming to us for treatment. We just offered them talk. The psychiatrists didn't like my attitude *at all*.

"How did I get into the peace movement? I'm not. The peace movement is mostly people who sit around and talk about how terrible it is that the U.S. and the Soviet Union aren't talking to each other. That's a waste of time. What you've got to do is to *do* it: to go out and start talking to the Russians. It can be done. That's what I'm going to do this week, with the help of people like Joseph."

"Who's Joseph?"

"Joseph Goldin is our key Soviet contact. If I accomplish anything on this trip, it will be because of him. You'll see."

After a change of planes, we are finally descending toward Moscow's Sheremetevo airport. On his landing card, in the space for "occupation," Joel puts "Futurist." On his visa application, he has listed himself as "Cultural Repairman."

We get our passports stamped, and go to collect our bags. Joel's suitcase and mine are there, but no box of slow-scan equipment. Furthermore, the British Airways people seem to have gone home for the night. "It will come next plane maybe," a Soviet official suggests doubtfully.

We are met at the exit from customs by a stocky, smiling, round-faced man in a black wool cap. He is Joseph Goldin. "My cosmic brother!" Joel calls out, embracing him.

That night we have dinner at our hotel, the Metropol, a marvelous relic of pre-Revolutionary times. Under a high, wide stained-glass roof, Joel and Joseph, who have worked together now for nearly two years, talk about space-bridges, global town meetings, and other electronic schemes. Joseph has no official connection to any institution, a fact that has apparently sometimes gotten him in trouble with the authorities. But clearly he is Joel's counterpart in the Soviet Union, another cultural repairman.

After dinner Joseph rises to head home to his apartment and says, "OK. I go back to my headquarters now. I see you in the morning."

Later, in his hotel room, Joel considers what to do about the missing slow-scan box. It is now Friday evening. Joel has a business guidebook to Moscow with five phone numbers listed for British Airways, including, allegedly, the home numbers of the resident manager and his assistant. But four numbers don't answer and at the fifth a Russian voice vigorously denies any connection to any airline.

"Obviously we're not going to find this thing over the weekend," says Joel, as we part for the night. "Well, that will give you a chance to get to know Joseph."

Most Americans who go to the Soviet Union end up meeting certain types of Russians: Intourist guides with their grammatically perfect English; well-dressed smiling officials at the Soviet Peace Committee who sit across a green baize table laden with mineral water and explain how much the Soviet Union wants peace; young people who come up to you on the street and want to buy your blue jeans; Jewish refuseniks who have been denied permission to emigrate.

Joseph Goldin fits into none of these categories. He wears nondescript corduroy pants, a skull-fitting black wool cap, and a thick blue denim work shirt. A thin fringe of beard surrounds his face. In his lapel he wears a tiny silver dolphin-shaped pin—a token of his friendship with Igor Charkovsky, a Moscow theorist who believes in human communication with dolphins and whose followers practice underwater childbirth. And in a country where all professionals have business cards in the same format—last name, first name and patronymic, academic degree, title, address—Joseph has stationery showing a drawing of a man's head: the lower half is a face gazing at you intently, the top half is a partially completed, many-floored Tower of Babel. Around the edge of this head scrolls the Russian inscription: EXPEDI-

TION TO HIDDEN HUMAN RESERVES.

"The thing you have to understand about Joseph," says Joel, as he waits, Saturday morning in his hotel room, for Joseph to arrive, "is that Joseph is single-minded. Everything he does is aimed at bringing into being one great plan he has."

"What's the plan?"

"Better let him explain it to you."

A short time later, Joseph arrives, with a brisk, purposeful stride that has successfully carried him past the *dezhurnaya*, the vigilant woman who sits at the stair landing of every floor of every Soviet hotel and shoos away nonguests. Joseph is just as stumped as Joel is by the missing slow-scan box. He says, "I will get my people working on this problem."

A little while later we go down to the hotel restaurant for lunch. Joseph brings a briefcase full of papers, and Joel his Radio Shack computer. Tapping away on the keyboard under the eyes of curious waiters, Joel plans the week's activities. He and Joseph schedule various meetings in the days ahead, for although the slow-scan exchange is at the top of the agenda, Joel still wants to talk to Soviet officials about his computer-networking plan. He is also juggling a dizzying variety of other U.S.-Soviet exchange projects: he is distributing copies of a peace poster; he is talking to Soviet children's book editors; and he and Joseph are gathering articles by Soviets and Americans and various other people (they have invited the Dalai Lama and the Pope to contribute) for an anthology on peace.

But all this is prologue, in Joseph's mind, to Joseph's central project, an idea he has called Mirror for Humanity. When he and Joel are finished with their business, I ask him about it.

"Humanity—sense all peoples share that they belong to same humanity—does not exist. Yet. That we must create. How? Use radical new means of communications: large-screen TV."

Joseph outlines his plan: Mitsubishi/Diamond Vision, a Japanese-American joint venture, has manufactured about 30 giant television screens, some as high as a three-story building.

The screens cost several million dollars each. So far they have been installed mainly in U.S. and European sports arenas. Joseph's Mirror for Humanity plan is to create a network of such screens, linked together by satellite TV transmissions, in cities everywhere. The screens would be placed in squares and parks; people in each city would be able to see and talk to people in the others. And, Joseph explains, because you could place TV cameras to take in each screen, as well as people in front of it, people watching elsewhere would be able to see themselves *in* other cities.

Joel Schatz

Joseph Goldin listens to a holophonic sound tape brought to Russia by Joel Schatz.

"This is what I mean by creating humanity," he concludes. "The kingdom of words is dead. Atomic weapons have created a new kind of silence. We must *see* each other. The last times we looked at the earth, we discovered great things—whole continents, geography. Now we must discover nations. We must reach new level of consciousness. When you see yourself in the other city, we no longer have just exchanges of representatives of populations, but of entire populations themselves."

That evening we have dinner with a foreign correspondent friend of Joel's, his family, and some Russian friends of theirs. The friends speak no English, and Joel no Russian, but he is not the least bit handicapped. I know a little Russian, and translate their questions to Joel:

"You are a follower of Reagan?"

Joel shakes his head and frowns: "Absolutely not."

"You are a Democrat then?"

"No. Completely independent."

"Ah . . . there was a man named Anderson who ran for president in your country several years ago. An independent also. You are a follower of Anderson?"

Joel shakes his head again, and gestures at his place setting. "Reagan—here," he points at the knife; "Anderson—here," he moves his finger a few inches to the plate; "Democrats—here," he moves his finger a few inches more to the fork; "Me—*there*," he raises his whole arm and points at the ceiling.

In the evening of the following day, we are with Joseph again, walking in an old district of central Moscow. "Come. This way," Joseph says. "I want to show you. Now. Stop. Right here. This is where we will have Diamond Vision screen for Moscow."

We are looking down a picturesque, 19th-century street called Stari Arbat, which is being turned into a pedestrian mall.

"Very important to have the screens where there is no traffic," says Joseph. "You know, on certain holidays, Gorky Street, our main street, is closed to traffic. It is incredible experience! To see people moving. A flow, a flood of bodies, a *liquid* of bodies! Feeling themselves liberated to go where traffic is expected to be. So Diamond Vision must be where there are no cars."

I ask how he envisions people being able to communicate with one another, city-to-city, on these giant screens. "Will there be audio channels too?"

"Oh yes! Many of them. You will be able to come up to the screen and see somebody and say, 'Hello! How are you? This is my child—look! Will you write letter to me?'"

Joseph's enthusiasm is so infectious that I haven't the heart to ask why he thinks the Soviet government, which does its best to discourage even international phone calls, would ever permit such a thing. Joel also has little concern for such obstacles. "You know," he says, gazing down the empty street, "you could even use these screens to have a teleconference banquet. Seattle and Tashkent sit down to have dinner together. Why not?"

Joseph is 44. In his youth, he says, he studied music, then biophysics. He also wrote movie scripts, worked as a

sailor on Arctic Ocean freighters, and worked with a Bulgarian psychologist who believed that if people act the role of Russians, Americans, or whatever, they can learn a totally new foreign language in three weeks.

"But I always felt not complete. That this was not me. I knew all the time: real musicians should be a little different from me. Real scientists should be a little different from me. It was only when I met people in your human potential movement that I heard people say: 'Trust your vision. Follow your instincts.' This is explanation of my strange way of life.

"I want to do such things here, to explore our hidden human reserves. All the time people are telling me: 'Joseph! You have forgotten in what country you are living. You cannot do that here. You should leave for America.' I know the difficulties. I said goodbye at airport many times to many people who decide to leave. And of course I had bad time—they put me twice in psychiatric hospital. I tell you about that another time. But this is my country. I went to Academy of Sciences. Finally they were interested, they let me set up a committee to study hidden human reserves. I said to them 'Look! There are waves of interest, curiosity, love moving to us from seashore of America but nobody here can receive such signals. We must make instruments to receive these waves and send reflections back.'"

On Monday morning, Joel and Joseph are hard at work in Joel's room at the Metropol Hotel, planning the first U.S.-Soviet slow-scan TV exchange, which is to happen on Friday. Overnight several telexes have come in from people Joel is working with at the Ark Communications Institute in San Francisco, a new foundation that promotes electronic exchanges and world peace, which is financing this whole project.

"Tremendous," says Joel, passing the telexes to Joseph. "Look, they've lined up two Nobel Prize winners to appear, Don Glaser and Glenn Seaborg, who used to be head of the Atomic Energy Commission—he's a real catch. And I called Gerard Piel at *Scientific American* before I left. Now all we have to do is get that damned box here. Time to call British Airways. Somebody should be there now."

Joel takes out and installs another piece of electronic equipment he has brought along, a sort of portable speakerphone—a small, battery-powered loudspeaker that fastens onto a telephone receiver.

Out of this little gadget comes first the sound of a phone ringing at the other end of the line, and then the calm, very English voice of John Burley, Moscow station manager of British Airways. He says that he is terribly sorry to hear of the lost slow-scan and that British Airways will do everything in its power to locate it.

"Please hurry," says Joel. "We've *got* to find that box. There's a lot riding on this. We've got two Nobel Prize winners ready to go on the air Friday."

"Jolly good," says Burley, very politely, "I'll do what I can. I better ring off now."

Joseph pulls out some photocopied papers from his briefcase, and gives them to me. "About Mirror for Humanity. I brought it for you. Read."

Joseph seems to be the only person in Moscow with easy access to a photocopier, an instrument strictly off-limits to most Soviets.

"I have friends," he explains.

The typed manuscript, in English, is headed HOW TO ADDRESS ONE BILLION PEOPLE. It is an outline for a grand-opening ceremony for Mirror for Humanity on Hiroshima Day:

"As the documentary film prologue of the Global Town Meeting draws to a close somewhere on the Globe day will break.

"As the Sun rises above the horizon the montage film crew will take the Sun up over the Earth through the network of space bridges, switching the image from one enormous videoscreen to another in a smooth glissando, changing with the landscapes and different populations. In some countries we see yesterday's twilight, in others the dark of night. . . .

"People in the seven countries will see seven 'wonders of the world', *sakura* (flowering cherry) in Japan at the foot of Mount Fuji, the Bronze Age observatory at Stonehenge in England, the Sistine Chapel in Italy, a view of the Moscow Kremlin from the Moskva River, the Zwinger in Dresden and the dolphinarium in Hawaii."

When I finish reading, Joseph adds: "The sunrise we will show from megalithic observatory on the island of Malta. They have ancient sunrise ritual there, at Hagar Qim, one of oldest observatories in the world. People watched sunrise there thousands of years ago. This we must use to show humanity we can watch sunrise thousands of years from now."

The next morning Joel and Joseph are to meet again in Joel's hotel room. This time Joseph is not successful in getting past the *dezhurnaya* on our floor, who sternly marches him down to the front desk. Only after 20 minutes of arguing is he finally allowed back up. The speaker-box is still on Joel's phone; the room is now strewn with papers, notebooks, a nearly empty bottle of lemon-flavored vodka, and several collages of sketches and photographs brought by Joseph. Without pausing to take off his ever-present black wool cap, he explains:

"This is what we are preparing for the slow-scan conference Friday. This," he gestures at one of the sheets, "is Academician Raushenbakh. Famous Soviet scientist. He designed equipment that photographed dark side of the moon, 25 years ago. And here," he points to some sketching beside the picture, showing lines receding to a horizon, like a diagram about how to draw in perspective, "is where we are showing how Raushenbakh, like every scientist, must create his own space in which to work. These are images that represent his space. It is like Cézanne had his own conception of space. The geniuses of every culture distort space, which is why all artists at all times are always right.

"Music can be involved also. And three screens can be used, not only one! Also we can split this image, and make many Raushenbakhs. He will be here, there, maybe over there."

The phone rings. Over the loudspeaker box comes the voice of Rick Lukens, a collaborator of Joel's in California:

"We think we've got a vice president of AT&T to be on the hookup. We're going to have people in four different cities at this end: Berkeley, New York, Washington, and Boulder."

"Rick, that's tremendous," says Joel. "But we can't do anything if we don't get the damned box. Any word on that?"

"We're working on it. British Air-

Sophia Ivanov

Electronic conspirators: from a Moscow faith healer's apartment, Joel Schatz talks to a U.S. radio audience; Joseph Goldin* (center) *prepares to go on the air.

ways can't find it anywhere."

Joseph gets on the phone: "Rick! Each of the scientists participating must bring images to transmit that show creation of his own space. His space in which to work. We will create space for Raushenbakh. We will create space for Goldansky, who discovered molecules in cosmic rays. We will do it!"

Joel takes the receiver away from Joseph. "But this whole thing's irrelevant if we can't get the box. We have to get the box!"

The irony of all this is that neither Joel nor Joseph cares much about slow-scan television. Joel's dream project is his U.S.-Soviet computer-conferencing network. Joseph's is the Mirror for Humanity. But—it has taken me several days to figure this out—the Soviet Academy of Sciences has given permission only for a slow-scan TV test, while officialdom here is still wary of the other, more dramatic projects. So Joseph maneuvered to get Joel invited to demonstrate slow-scan TV. The two of them, who share a sixth sense of how bureaucracies work, have decided to go all out with this project in order to get their feet in the official door. Thus, each hopes, their grander visions will be made easier to realize.

Heading out the door, Joseph turns back with one final burst of inspiration:

"We must do slow-scan in color! We must find ways of making it three-dimensional! And we must call it something special, this new link. When film was invented, they called it motion pictures. Here we have no movement, so why don't we call this motionless pictures? First motionless-picture link between the U.S. and the Soviet Union!"

Joel is proceeding on the assumption that the slow-scan equipment will get here by Friday. Therefore he must secure a location for the Soviet end of this performance. He is now striding purposefully down a long corridor with doors to offices on either side. Joel's pace accelerates as he approaches the office he is aiming at, that of a Soviet agency that provides conference facilities for foreign business people. He comes through the door practically at a run. The receptionist is startled by the sight of this tall bearded American in a purple shirt, carrying his portable computer in a purple cloth case.

She scurries off and reappears in a moment with a frowning man in a brown suit. He listens in increasing bewilderment to Joel's talk about AT&T, slow-scan TV, Gerard Piel, ". . . and two Nobel Prize winners ready to go on the air."

"Low scan?" he asks. The proper message obviously has not gotten here from the Academy of Sciences.

Joel explains everything anew. "This event is vital for the planet! We're set to go on Friday. We're going to need two open phone lines to the U.S., a TV set, a video technician, a good audio amplifier, and facilities for the press."

At this strategic moment in the conversation, Joel pulls out his card. The Soviet Union is very big on business cards. Joel's reads:

ARK COMMUNICATIONS INSTITUTE
U.S.-Soviet Special Projects Division
Joel Schatz, Director

The *Director* looks impressive, even if Joel himself is the entire Special Projects Division.

"Wait a minute. Please!" The official appears more and more agitated. He is probably trying to decide whether this crazy American was let into the country by accident, or if there is some $50 million computer deal riding on his being treated properly. "Please. Wait here."

He takes us to a conference room in the same suite of offices. He shoos out three Russians having a meeting there,

then heads off to make some phone calls, trying to figure out who we are.

"There are two rules for dealing with bureaucracies," says Joel, while we wait. "One is to come in fast, faster than anyone can see, like an unguided missile. The second is to give *them* credit for the results."

The bureaucrats in this office are now conferring out of our earshot. They do not seem to be able to decide what to do with us. Finally they tell us to come back tomorrow.

That evening I question Joseph some more:

"What about those times they put you in the psychiatric hospital? What happened?"

"Well," says Joseph, "January 1983 came big Andropov campaign for everyone to be at his job. You remember? January 22d I was invited to police—local police, not KGB. They ask me to bring documents showing I am employed somewhere. 'Well,' I explain, 'I am doing my business. Space-bridges. Hidden human reserves. What is problem?'

"'Joseph,' they say, 'it is new time and new reality. We are just doing our job. We give you a month. If you need facilitation to find a job, we help. But on 22d of February, you can expect us.'

"So a month later police knock on my door. 'Month passed,' they say. 'Where is document that you are working?'

"'I am working,' I say to them.

"'Where?'

"'I take part in two international competitions. With Mirror for Humanity project. One is international architects contest for new communications center in Paris. I design space-bridge terminal.'

"'But Joseph,' they say, 'Where you paid?'

"'Easy to explain,' I tell them. 'Look, here are the list of prizes. If I win, I paid by jury.'

"'But if you not win?'

"'That's my problem. I try next time.'

"'Joseph,' they say, 'Why you making trouble for us? Why you not working?'

"'I am fully employed,' I say, 'by myself!'

"Then they put me in hospital. For examination. Anyone who is not employed, you see, they think he is psychiatrically sick. Finally they take me to court.

"'What are you doing?' the judge asks me.

"'Are you really interested?' I ask. 'I am making researches about hidden human reserves.' I make this testimony into one-hour lecture.

"Finally the judge opens the court door to me. 'I wish you good luck, sir,' he says, 'but please bring to court all documents proving you are working.'

"Then again they come to put me in hospital. This time psychiatric hospital, much worse. First time was only psychiatric ward of regular hospital. Twelve days I was in second hospital. I was working all time, writing draft of Mirror for Humanity proposal. I write letters to people, to Central Committee, to America, to Academician Velikhov [vice president of the Soviet Academy of Sciences] all from hospital as if it were my headquarters. Other patients very interested. Academician Velikhov was out of country; when he got back, he call up to somebody, explain that I am doing major work, and they let me out of hospital. Nurse said: 'This has never happened before.'"

Although Joseph is too discreet to mention it, others in Moscow believe it was the state radio-TV authorities who got him arrested, since his work with the space-bridges to America encroaches on their territory. Opposing them have been Joseph's patrons, two powerful scientists: Boris Raushenbakh, the dark-side-of-the-moon man, and Yevgeny Velikhov, who heads Mikhail Gorbachev's drive to widen the use of computers in the USSR. Joseph claims he was not mistreated in the hospital, or forced to take drugs—the usual Soviet routine with hospitalized dissidents. But friends who saw him after he was released said he was deeply shaken and that it took him some months to recover his energy.

Unfortunately, we are not privy to the tug-of-war between Joseph Goldin's jailers and the people who managed to get him released. But in that argument, obviously, was summed up a major tension in Soviet life today: between the centuries-old Russian censorship of contact with the West and Gorbachev's drive to catch up to Europe and America technologically—for which scientific exchanges are essential.

For Joseph, however, the aim is not Soviet technical progress, but something grander.

"Joseph," I ask him finally, "are you sure it won't get you in trouble, my writing about how they put you in the hospital?"

"My friend," says Joseph, "only one thing gets me in trouble, big trouble. Atomic war. That I work to prevent." He places his palms together and shoots his hands forward, like a diver. "I am like a bird with single destination."

Wednesday. In the morning, Joel is elated. A telex has come from California overnight: BOX LOCATED AT ISTANBUL AIRPORT. THEY WILL SHIP TO YOU SOONEST.

"Istanbul!" says Joel. "How the *hell* did it get there? They must have put it on the wrong plane at Heathrow."

While we are waiting for further word, Joseph arrives, full of news about additional Soviet scientists who have agreed to participate on Friday.

The phone rings. The voice of John Burley at British Airways is talking to Joel on the speakerphone, sounding rather disturbed:

"Mr. Schatz. Do you . . . uh . . . have any influence with the Turkish government?"

"Nobody's ever asked me that before. Why?"

"Well, uh . . . it seems that Turkish customs has impounded your equipment. Our chap there says he can't get it released."

Joel holds a council of war. How can he get the box sprung?

He first considers calling the American embassy here in Moscow: surely they could put pressure on the Turks? Then we reject this idea: the U.S. government doesn't know about this whole venture to begin with, and, if it did, might not like it. Joseph remembers that he knows an American correspondent here who knows the Turkish ambassador. He reaches for the phone.

Joel fires off a telegram to the United States, BOX IMPOUNDED BY TURKISH CUSTOMS ISTANBUL AIRPORT. BRING MAXIMUM PRESSURE TO BEAR. URGENT.

There are more phone calls, all fruitless. Joel looks ever more disheveled. In precisely 48 hours' time two Nobel Prize winners, one prominent editor, a vice president of AT&T, and several of

the most famous scientists in the Soviet Union are scheduled to be electronically linked together by a box of TV equipment now under lock and key in Istanbul.

"They can't *do* this," Joel says in despair. "They have no *right* to. That box wasn't even going to Turkey."

Again the phone rings, and the voice on the speaker is John Burley's. This time he is more cheerful: he has just had a telex from British Airways' man in Istanbul, saying the box is freed and will be put on the first plane to Moscow.

Once again, the whole venture seems possible. Joel and Joseph drink a vodka toast and make plans.

Late that afternoon, Joseph and Joel head for Sheremetevo airport to meet the box. And there it is, coming off an Iraqi plane, with *Colorado Video* still on the side. They let Joel through the customs barrier so he can pick it up. However, when he tries to get back through customs it becomes clear that his mission is meeting with less than complete success. He can get the box *into* Soviet customs today, an official tells him, as if that's a big accomplishment, but he cannot get it *out* of Soviet customs without an authorizing letter. The box is trundled away on a baggage cart by a workman in a blue smock, impounded by Soviet customs.

The next day is Thursday. After a morning of frantic phone calls and another trip out to the airport with the necessary papers, Joel gets the box released at last.

Several hours later, with about 18 hours to go before the demonstration with the Nobel Prize winners, we are back in downtown Moscow, in a conference room with a Tass news ticker in the corner clicking out stories about fraternal visits of Soviet delegations to Czechoslovakia. We eagerly take the slow-scan parts out of the box. Reportorial objectivity has vanished; I have somehow been conscripted into this madcap adventure and am trying to plug cables into sockets and studying diagrams to see where Wire A attaches to Input B.

While Joel and I are trying to figure out how this unfamiliar equipment works, Joseph, who can never stay still for a moment, is searching for photos of great moments in human communication to transmit on the slow-scan link. He is now on the phone to friends at the Moscow film studios, asking for pictures of Watson and Bell. Meanwhile, several Soviet officials who have just arrived have noticed Joel's Radio Shack computer. He cannot resist stopping everything to show it to them.

"Three hundred ninety-nine dollars! And for $1.82, I can send a message to the United States. See this outlet here?" He points to the back of the machine. "Through this I can talk to any city in the world. With only four AA batteries! This is going to revolutionize communication on the planet!"

The Russians cluster about, fascinated, and play with the computer while Joel resumes trying to assemble the slow-scan.

Joel is hoping to test the equipment with a transmission to the United States tonight; two phone lines have been ordered for 10:00 P.M. But after five hours of waiting, the phone connections never materialize, and the test is postponed until tomorrow.

Joseph leaves us at the hotel. "I go back to my headquarters," he says. "Call me any time of night if there are developments. Don't hesitate."

At midday the next day (midnight in California), we reassemble in the same room we were in last night. This is our last day in Moscow but our first chance to even test the equipment, and so the slow-scan meeting of the Nobel Prize winners, et al., has been regretfully postponed. Joel is planning to leave the equipment here, and arrange the gathering of scientists from back in the United States.

There are some 20 people in the room now. Joel has his two telephone lines at last. One of them is soldered to the TV set, the other to a phone Joel is holding. Joel walks back and forth across one end of the room, shouting into the phone: "Rick! Can you hear me?" Finally, out of an amplifier comes the voice of Rick Lukens in Berkeley, 11 time zones away. A troubleshooter from the slow-scan factory in Boulder was supposed to be on the line too, but has evidently gone to bed. The TV screen is completely blank.

"If Joseph's Gorky Park boys were here, we'd have this damned thing fixed in a minute," Joel confides exasperatedly. Joseph has friends who run the discotheque in Gorky Park.

"We're transmitting again, Joel," says the disembodied voice from Berkeley. "Can you see anything?"

Suddenly an image begins to appear on the TV set, formed by a rapidly moving dot traveling from left to right across the screen.

"Richard!" says Joel in delight, recognizing the face of his associate Richard Civille in California. "This is a great moment for the planet!"

The picture leaves much to be desired, however. Although vaguely recognizable as a human figure sitting in a chair, it looks as if black icicles were dripping down from the top of the screen, and as if the whole thing were viewed through a web of herringbones.

Joel explains the problem on the phone, and then says, "OK, now I'm going to send you something." He aims the video camera at a painting on the wall, and pushes the button. "Can you recognize this guy?"

Thirty seconds later comes a voice from Berkeley: "Lenin!" A buzz of excited whispering in Russian runs around the roomful of Soviet bureaucrats. A visual image from this room has just traveled almost halfway round the world, over the phone. Several of the men stand up, to get a better view of the TV.

"We're still getting all that black stuff, Joel," says the voice from Berkeley. "And the herringbones. Send us another picture and we'll try sending the same picture back to you."

"OK, Rick," says Joel, "I'm going to send you Joseph."

He points the camera at Joseph. With his blue denim shirt and silver dolphin pin, Joseph is the only man in the room not wearing a coat and tie. A minute later, with a double row of black icicles, one acquired going, and one coming, a barely recognizable picture of Joseph appears on the Soviet TV screen.

"Aha!" says Joseph, who has never been allowed to travel to the West. His round face beams triumphantly at the roomful of Soviet bureaucrats: "I have been to America and back!"

However, after two and a half hours, nothing has been able to get rid of the black icicles. The people in Berkeley, where it is now 2:30 A.M., sound increasingly groggy, and say they're going to have to do some research on this problem. Joel puts the slow-scan equipment back into its box and leaves

it on loan with the Soviets. We head back to our hotel to pack.

On the drive out to the airport the next morning, Joel is ebullient. "Look what we've accomplished!" he says. "We made the first-ever link between the U.S. and the Soviet Union with this technology. And we've got their commitment to go ahead. And we've left the stuff here. In fact, we've left only *half* the stuff here, that's the great thing: they can *only* use this box to communicate with the U.S. This will be catching. You know, there's a guy named Sheldrake, an Englishman, who postulates that the universe doesn't have laws; it only has habits. That's the approach I take. We've got to change those habits, shift the paradigm. I think we made a start."

Joseph is also happy. From the taxi's front seat, he leans over and brandishes today's sheaf of photocopied papers. "I have here already plans for first four uses of slow-scan! One: Academician Raushenbakh and your NASA people transmit images about peaceful uses of space. Two: Soviet and American authors talk to each other. Three: 25th anniversary of invention of the laser is celebrated by Soviet and American scientists. Four: global town meeting about higher consciousness research."

It is clear Joseph sees slow-scan as a step closer to the Mirror for Humanity project. We can use it, he says, to prove that his larger vision can be done. "Joel!" he concludes. "I think you must talk to Armand Hammer about funding Mirror for Humanity."

At the airport, Joseph accompanies us to the head of the customs line. Finally a guard puts out his arm to prevent him from going farther.

"Remember!" Joseph calls across the widening space between us, his briefcase in hand and the black woolen cap on his head. "Age of religion is over! Age of politics is over! Age of communication has begun!"

Do electronic exchange efforts between the United States and the Soviet Union do any good? It is so much fun being around Joel Schatz and Joseph Goldin that one hesitates to spoil the party by even asking such a question. Nonetheless, a skeptic might point out that ultimately technology alone does not decide what gets communicated between peoples; governments do. For the entire 69 years of their two countries' troubled coexistence, Americans and Soviets have had the use of the two great communication technologies of modern times: the mail and the telephone. But both nations have at times interfered with the delivery of mail from the other, and the USSR several years ago cut off the direct dialing of international phone calls. If two-way TV and other such exotica depart too far from the bland fare they have been used for so far, the Soviet authorities could cut them off as well.

"OK," says Joel impatiently to such arguments, "but why do people get transformed when they participate in a space-bridge? Why do people who go to the Soviet Union for the first time come back on a high, even when they see refuseniks and the KGB and all the rest of it? It's because they've seen that there are *human beings* over there. That's a revolutionary thought today. Do you see it in *Rambo*? Tell me that."

Undaunted by any doubts, Joel, after his return from Russia, plunges ahead with his various ventures. Many telexes to various Soviet officials requesting another slow-scan TV link are unanswered, but Joel remains optimistic: there now are signs that the Soviets are interested in the project most dear to him, the computer network.

Some three months after our trip together, Joel returns to the Soviet Union. A blizzard of telexes from him pours back to San Francisco: a birthday telex to his son, love telexes to his wife, instructions to travel agents and to a wide variety of electronic co-conspirators. Then finally a message: AMAZING BREAKTHROUGHS. DETAILS ON RETURN.

After he gets back, I go to Joel's apartment. Sitar music drones on the record player. Piles of telexes are stacked on his floor. Joel proudly demonstrates his latest electronic gadget, a tape recording of holophonic sound: "It's three-dimensional—a quantum leap beyond conventional stereo." He is full of new plans. About a delegation of California business executives he is taking to Russia in a few months. About using slow-scan TV to demonstrate medical equipment. About a new technology called "compressed video."

"Plus," he says, "we're going to get kids talking to each other. In Moscow I talked to the principal of High School number 45, that's an elite school where they have most of their courses in English. I'm going to do a computer link between them and a high school in San Francisco, where the kids can talk to each other. And we'll throw some slow-scan in there, so they can see each other too.

"Also, we're going to link up alcoholism researchers in both countries—there're people at Berkeley hot to do this—and economists who want to talk about converting arms factories to civilian use. And this trip I got in to see Velikhov, at the Academy of Sciences. We talked about a joint U.S.-Soviet trip to Mars, and about setting up communications teleports in Moscow and San Francisco. It was fantastic."

Over the weeks that follow, Joel begins to be worried that his messages to Joseph Goldin go unanswered.

"I bet they want him out of circulation during the Youth Festival that's going on now," says Joel. "They're rounding a lot of people up. Too many foreigners around."

Joel sends urgent telexes to two foreign correspondent friends in Moscow, and the next day one replies: JOSEPH WAS PICKED UP BY LOCAL POLICE ON WEDNESDAY . . . AND TAKEN TO A PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC. . . . A MOVE HAS BEEN LAUNCHED MAINLY BY RAUSHENBAKH TO GET HIM RELEASED.

Two days later comes another message: JOSEPH IS STILL NOT FREE. WE ARE DOING ALL WE CAN. . . . UNFORTUNATELY, ALL THE TOP PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH JOSEPH ARE ALSO OUT OF TOWN.

"Dacha time," says Joel. "Velikhov and all Joseph's other supporters are off at their summer dachas. That's why the police were able to put him in the clink now. He'll be there until they're back from vacation."

In the meantime, Joel's longtime dream of a computer network linking U.S. and Soviet scientists is finally starting to take form.

"This is a breakthrough because an ongoing computer conference is a very un-Soviet kind of thing," he explains. "You see, in the Soviet Union, all official communication is up-and-down. But the essence of computer networking is that it's sideways communication. In leaving and getting

computer messages, people are equal partners in an exchange of information. The Soviets don't have anything like this. I think it's a potentially revolutionary form of communication—far more so for a top-down society like theirs than for one like ours."

After Joel makes the arrangements, the half-dozen Soviet scientists and half-dozen American scientists in the conference take to their computers, introduce themselves, and begin to trade messages, mostly about computer languages and programming techniques. But, in reading over their messages, my eye always travels to the more personal ones. For example, a message from one Soviet scientist refers to Murray Turoff, an eminent American computer expert at the conference.

WHEN READING OFFICIAL LETTERS, ARTICLES OR BOOKS I NEVER THINK ABOUT HOW THE AUTHOR LOOKS LIKE. BUT CLOSE COMMUNICATION . . . IS DIFFERENT. I OFTEN CATCH MYSELF LATELY ON TRYING IMAGINE HOW MURRAY LOOKS LIKE. . . . I REMEMBER I WAS SURPRISED MEETING JOEL FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MOSCOW AFTER SHORT PERIOD OF COMMUNICATION. WHY MUST I BE SURPRISED LOOKING AT THE PERSON FOR THE FIRST TIME?

All this time, Joel is shooting off telexes to Joseph in Moscow. No answer. Then one day a message comes from a correspondent friend: JOEL: BIG NEWS—PEOPLE WHO DEVELOPED SOVIET GIANT SCREEN ANALOGOUS TO DIAMOND VISION ARE FUNDING FILM ENTITLED "MIRROR FOR HUMANITY" BASED ON JOSEPH'S SCRIPT. JOSEPH IS COMPLETELY ABSORBED IN THE PROJECT. SPACE-BRIDGE SEQUENCES ARE ENVISAGED.

"Incredible," says Joel, interpreting this new data. "From the nuthouse to this in a few weeks. Things are looking up."

The computer conference continues. At one point Murray Turoff describes visiting his ill, 98-year-old father—a man who came to the United States in 1905, one step ahead of the czar's police. I WOULD LIKE SOMEHOW TO CONVEY TO HIM THAT I LEAVE HIM AT THE HOSPITAL AND GO TO THE MOTEL ROOM AND HOOK UP TO RUSSIA, reports Turoff to the network a bit sadly. HOWEVER, EVEN IN HIS MORE COHERENT MOMENTS HE HAS NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHAT I WAS DOING.

After several months in which the computer conference participants talk to one another with increasing familiarity about hardware, software, and the prospect of conferencing bilingually, Joel suddenly calls me up, alarmed and indignant:

"They've done a computerectomy on us!"

"What? How?"

He explains: "The Department of Commerce told the New Jersey Institute of Technology [site of the mainframe computer on which the U.S. and Soviet scientists have been talking to one another] this may be illegal. So the conference has stopped. This is insane! We're not breaking any laws. I'm getting a lawyer. I'm getting the ACLU into the act. This is free speech! Planetary communication among consenting adults!"

Over the next several weeks, he keeps me posted. "It seems," he reports a week or two later, "that since there's no regulation saying that you *can* do this kind of computer conference with Russians, they're saying we *can't*."

Finally, with Joel on the phone as well, his lawyer manages to get through to the right person at the Department of Commerce. The man has something to do with export licenses. "This was unreal," says Joel, describing the phone call. " 'Export!' we told him. 'We're not exporting anything except words! The same things you export in a book or a magazine article or a first-class letter. Are there laws against that?' "

This argument wins the day, and, after an interruption of three weeks, the New Jersey Institute of Technology gets a written go-ahead from the Commerce Department, setting a precedent for future U.S.-Soviet computer links.

At the end of 1985, Joel decides to go public. To celebrate the past year's activities, he and Joseph plan "Midnight in Moscow" parties in San Francisco and Moscow for New Year's Eve. Because of the 11-hour time difference, the new year will arrive in Moscow when it is lunchtime in San Francisco.

"Now we'll *really* put the slow-scan to work," Joel explains to me. "We've ironed out the bugs now—no more

Track Two Diplomacy

Joel Schatz is this country's most colorful practitioner of something known to its initiates as Track Two Diplomacy—Track One being the traditional type practiced by diplomats. Track Two Diplomacy, or nongovernmental exchanges between the United States and the Soviet Union, has burgeoned in the last few years.

Track Two Diplomats have set up exchange visits by U.S. and Soviet delegations of athletes, editors, doctors, and teachers. Groups of American herbalists have gone to study nontraditional medicine in Russia. Groups of Soviets have come to talk human potential while soaking in the hot tubs of the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California. Americans have worked for months at a time on Soviet fishing vessels. And last summer, in a gesture designed to echo the Reagan-Gorbachev summit talks, an expedition of American and Soviet teenagers climbed to the top of 18,481-foot Mount Elbrus, the highest peak in the Soviet Union and in Europe.

There are severe limits on any kind of U.S.-Soviet exchange, of course: Americans can talk and travel freely, but only a small number of carefully screened, closely chaperoned Russians are allowed to travel abroad, and none ever question official Soviet policy in public. But whatever the shortcomings of Track Two Diplomacy, they pale in comparison with those of Track One: the United States and the Soviet Union have been negotiating on and off for three decades and have never agreed to dismantle a single nuclear weapons system. —A.H.

black icicles. Joseph's going to get his scientist friends, Arkady Raikin, the great Soviet comedian, some folk dancers, and maybe Yevtushenko. We'll get some equivalent people at this end."

At last, it seems, there will be an event like the one Joel was trying to arrange in Moscow, a long-delayed climax to the saga of the slow-scan. A sympathetic San Francisco businessman has loaned Joel his office, and on New Year's Eve about 100 people assemble there for a buffet lunch. Joel steps before a microphone and explains that Joseph and his friends are already now assembling with a slow-scan in a Moscow café. Everyone applauds.

The room grows more crowded. The appointed hour comes and goes. A phone rings, and there is a sudden hush.

Joel picks up the receiver with a booming "Hello!" Then he grimaces and tells the crowd: "Wrong number."

A few minutes later there is a buzz of excitement from his end of the room. Eight different TV crews surround Joel, jostling for position, pointing microphone booms at his face. He is talking on the phone. A few minutes later he takes the microphone again to tell the crowd—which by this time has swollen to 150 or so—"We can't even get through to the international operator in Pittsburgh. And if *we* can't get through, the Russians can't. It's electronic gridlock."

Reporters scribble down the phrase in their notebooks. The crowd applauds. Joel sits down with his Radio Shack computer on his lap and fires off some telexes to Moscow. One after another, the various people who were scheduled to send slow-scan images to Moscow perform for the crowd, to ever-greater applause. Poet Michael McClure reads a poem, "partly in English and partly in an invented language, so there's no translation problem." He reads another poem, about gravity, "something universal for all of us." Someone else takes the microphone to introduce an audiotape of whale calls. Another person announces a videotape of Eskimos doing a peace dance on the ice of the frozen Bering Sea. Astronaut Rusty Schweickart speaks about how he has seen the earth from space and it's all one planet. The mayor of San Francisco phones in. Jazz singer Bobby McFerrin does a few songs. At the side of the room, tall and august but tapping his foot in time with the music, is Glenn Seaborg, Nobel laureate and former Atomic Energy Commission chair. When his turn at the mike comes, he makes an impassioned plea for a comprehensive test ban treaty.

At the side of the room, Joel is on the phone again. He shrugs helplessly.

"Try Sprint!" someone calls, to great hilarity.

But the press is happy: they've got good food, free drinks, a Nobel Prize winner, singers, poets, astronauts, and even a live Russian, a Tass correspondent who cheerfully gives interviews to all comers. Furthermore, the press has one another: the presence of so many reporters and cameras is tangible proof that this is a certified news event. After two or three more hours of drinking champagne, everyone seems to have forgotten that the TV screen is blank and that no calls from Moscow have gotten through.

The next day, astonishingly, the party is on the front page of the *Los Angeles Times*: "U.S.-Soviet New Year's Eve Party Gets Signals Crossed." "Busy Signal for Peace Call," reads the headline of an equally friendly story in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "Schmoozing Between Superpowers," says another San Francisco paper. "The revellers sipped wine, nibbled on hors d'oeuvres and talked of peace," reports Reuters to its subscribers worldwide. Joel is at first amazed, then delighted: "Fantastic! I think we're even more successful when we don't get through."

Meanwhile, the various exchanges continue. A recent telex from Joseph urges Joel: KEEP UP PRESSURE IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

Joel adds: "You know, there's only one problem in what we are doing, tying the world together electronically. We're still missing one billion people. I need to find a Joseph Goldin in China. I have some feelers out."

Adam Hochschild's new book, Half the Way Home: A Memoir of Father and Son, *will be published this month by Viking.*

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